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Aesop's Fables: Unity

The Father and His Sons

Once, there were brothers who always fought. One day, their father gave them a bundle of sticks. "Break this bundle," he said. But they couldn't break it.

Then the father took the bundle apart. He gave his sons one stick at a time. Each stick was easy to break!

The father said, "If you fight, you'll each be alone like a stick. You'll be easy to hurt. But if you love each other, you'll stay together. Like the bundle, you'll be strong."

The Eagle, the Cat, and the Wild Pig

Once there was a tall oak. An eagle made her nest at the top. A cat lived in a hole in the trunk. A wild pig lived in a little cave under the roots.

But the cat wanted the tree all to herself. So she went up to the eagle's nest. She said, "Eagle, we're in danger! See the pig digging? She wants to make the tree fall down! Then she'll grab us and eat us!" And the eagle got so scared that she couldn't move.

Then the cat crept down to the pig's cave. She said, "Pig, we're in danger! The eagle is waiting for us to leave the tree. Then she'll grab us and eat us!" And the pig got so scared that *she* couldn't move.

The eagle was so scared of the pig that she never left her nest. The pig was so scared of the eagle that she never left her cave. So the two scared animals died of hunger. And the cat had the tree all to herself.

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Exercise A: Detail Check

1. What did the father give his sons?

2. Did they break this thing on their first try?
Why or why not?

3. How were they able to break the thing?

4. Who moved into the top of the oak?
The middle?
The bottom?

5. Why didn't the pig leave her cave?

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Exercise B: Deeper Meanings

1. Why couldn't the sons break the bundle? What did their father want them to learn from this?

2. What if the eagle and the pig had talked to each other? They might have found out how the cat had lied to them. Why didn't they talk to each other?

3. Was the eagle brave? Was the pig brave? Why do you think so?

4. Why did the cat lie to the eagle and the pig?

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Exercise C: Imagine

1. How could the sons have broken the bundle of sticks?

2. If you were an animal, where would you want to live in the oak? Would you want the branches, the hole in the middle, or the cave under the roots? Why?

3. What if the cat had had two other cats for neighbors? Could two cats have gotten so scared of each other? How might the story have ended?

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Exercise F: Word Search

Find each word and cross it out. Words can be vertical or horizontal.

Z V X B M W Z V P I G J
 O A K P Y M W N L F R L
 D H Q T N S K X M C A T
 F R C E A G L E Z V W M
 A Z V W M B X K J Q J X
 T L R C G B U N D L E T
 H S N T Y T H L R C G R
 E W M B R O T H E R Z E
 R J M K W X B V Q B Z E

OAK	EAGLE	PIG	BUNDLE
TREE	CAT	FATHER	BROTHER

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Aesop's Fables: Unity Answer Key:

Exercise A

1. A bundle of sticks
2. No, the bundle was too strong for them to break it.
3. They broke each stick separately.
4. Top: Eagle
Middle: Cat
Bottom: Pig
5. She was afraid of the eagle.

Exercise B

1. When all the sticks were together, they were too strong for the sons to break.
The sons would be strong if they stayed together.
2. They were afraid of each other.
3. No. They got so scared they couldn't move!
4. She wanted the tree all to herself.

Exercise C

Answers vary.

Exercise D

Answers vary.

Exercise E

Answers vary.

Exercise F

.....PIG.
OAK.....
.....CAT
F..EAGLE....
A.....
T....BUNDLE
H.....R
E..BROTHER.E
R.....E

A Note on the Text:

The fables used here are a revised version of the translation by George Fyler Townsend, an edition of which was published in 1880. This translation is provided courtesy of Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org).